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Sketches of the Life and Character of the Rev. Thomas Wells Bray.

MR. BRAY was born in Branford, Sept. 22, O. S. 1738. His father was lost in Long-Island sound, when he was about three years of age, leaving him and a brother under the care and instruction of their mother. She afterwards removed to Farmington, where her children were brought up. In providing for them, it was judged best, as with her husband the greatest part of his property was lost, that the subject of these memoirs should learn a mechanical branch of business. He accordingly served an apprenticeship. During this time he was impressed with a deep concern for the welfare of his soul, and having obtained a comfortable hope, at the age of nineteen, made a public profession of religion. As his circumstances were straitened, it is probable, however great his desire might be, that he thought at this time, but little of attempting to obtain a public education. Having served two campaigns at the Northward, and husbanded with rigid economy his earnings in this and other methods, he at length deemed it prudent, to think seriously of qualifying himself for the ministry. As it respected a liberal education, this was happily effected, and in 1765 he received the honors of Yale-College.

During his college-life he was exceedingly intent in the pursuit of knowledge, and especially in that of the holy religion which he loved and professed. From the time of commencing his studies, he kept his eye fixed on the sacred desk, as the field in which he thirsted to labor, and was assiduous in those, which would more directly qualify him for usefulness in this station.—Of the church in college he was an active and exemplary member, and in academic pursuits in general, made reputable progress.

In Feb. 1766, he was licensed to preach the gospel. In April, he was invited to supply the pulpit at North-Guilford, vacant by the dismission of the Rev. John

Richards. His first sermon to the people with whom he afterwards settled, was from John iii. 3. *Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*

He was ordained, by Consociation, pastor of the third church in Guilford, Dec. 31, 1766. In the work of the ministry he continued until his death, April 23, 1808, being then in the seventieth year of his age, and forty second of his ministry.

In Nov. 1767, he was connected in marriage with Miss Sarah Robinson, by whom he had eleven children, eight of whom are still living.—It pleased an holy and sovereign God, in the course of his providence, to visit him with repeated and sore trials. In Sept. 1795, Dr. Lyman, his son in law, while on a visit at his house, sickened and died, at the age of twenty seven. In April 1799, he was called to the affecting scene of parting with his consort, who, after a long and tedious illness, endured with Christian patience and resignation, departed this life, in the fiftieth year of her age. Trying dispensations appeared ever to be accompanied with a gracious influence upon his heart. They made him humble, prayerful, and watchful. Of the divine government he entertained just and scriptural views, and to the divine will be bowed with a Christian temper of mind, saying, *Not my will, but thine be done.* In July 1799, he was again connected in marriage, with Mrs. Anna Bates, of Durham, who survives him.

In his preaching, Mr. Bray was plain, practical and evangelical. Sound in the faith, he laboured much, to establish his people in the firm belief of the doctrines of the gospel. Feeling a deep sense of the importance of religion, he zealously strove to impress their minds with the weight and reality of eternal things. A crucified Saviour was the foundation and theme of his public instruction, and the cross of Christ was his confidence and joy. To please God, and not men, in the manner of discharging his public duties, seemed evidently to be his great desire. In his preaching and conversation, a tender concern for the glory of God, and an affectionate regard for the flock of the Redeemer, were abundantly manifest. To increase the number of true believers, and to animate those who believed on the name of Christ in the divine life, he was *willing to spend and be spent.* Few ministers manifest a greater love for souls, or have their conversation more becoming the gospel, more seasoned with salt, more edifying to saints or admonitory to sinners. He made no ostentatious display of his goodness, but its reality could not be doubted, by those who had opportunities of intercourse with him.

Although his ministry was blessed with no special showers of grace, yet drops, efficacious and reviving, distilled from time to time, upon the garden of the Lord. There was a gradual ingathering of souls, and the concerns of the church were managed with much wisdom and order.

It was observed by his people, and worthy of remark, that as his race was almost run, he became more zealous, affectionate

and powerful in his preaching and ought to be gratefully acknowledged, that in the last years of his life, there was more vigor and earnestness among Christians, and greater numbers were awakened from carnal security,and gathered into the fold of Christ. When his sun was ready to go down, it pleased a merciful God to gladden his heart with a view of the dawning of that morning, which has since brightened into clear and perfect day; a day in which many souls have been *added unto the Lord.* As the evidences of a gracious visitation and special attention increased, just before his death, his soul was refreshed and animated, and in anticipation of a glorious harvest among the dear people whom he loved to the end, he rejoiced and gave thanks to God. The very close of his life was marked with an unusual degree of zeal and harmony among the followers of the Lamb, with serious enquiry about divine things, and great engagedness to attend the means of grace.

How joyful, how consoling, to a faithful servant of the Lord, ready to depart, are circumstances like these!

In the welfare and prosperity of his country, as well as of Zion, Mr. Bray felt a deep concern. During the revolutionary war, he served a considerable time as chaplain in the army.

His solicitude for the *rising generation* is evinced, not only by pathetic addresses to those under his immediate pastoral care, but by a *series of letters* addressed particularly to the young, which he left in manuscript, but which were not completed. Eight numbers were finished, from which it appears to have been his design, to exhibit, in a plain and concise manner, the evidences of revealed religion, the wiles of satan exerted peculiarly at the present day for the destruction of youth, and the most hopeful methods of resisting these wiles; and the infinite importance of real, experimental religion.—Whether he designed this tract for the view of the world or not, it indicates that the rising generation employed much of his thoughts.

It was the will of his divine Master, that he should not outlive his usefulness. He preached the sabbath but one previous to his death, in usual health. In the course of the ensuing week he was seized with a violent cold, which terminated in a fever, under the pressure of which he languished a few days and died. As his strength became much exhausted, and his state, of course, critical, beholding his end approaching, he set his house in order, and endeavored to realize the awful scenes before him. He enjoyed the clear exercise of his reason, in the last days of his life, and was blessed with much of the gracious presence of God. Taking by the hand a brother in the ministry, who visited him in his last illness, with humble and fixed confidence, he said, "*I am going to my Father's house.*" His hope rested, not on any faithfulness he had manifested in duty, or good he had done in the world, but solely on the grace of God, through the merits of the Redeemer. On his death-bed he expressed the fullest belief of the truth and excellence of the gospel of salvation, and recommend-

ed it most fervently to his family and people.

April 23d, 1808, he closed his earthly course, fell asleep in Jesus, and we humbly hope, ascended to the heavenly sanctuary.

On the 25th his funeral was attended by a numerous concourse of afflicted friends, who appeared to feel as if God had taken away the chariots and horsemen of Israel.*

Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!

* *It was a remarkable dispensation of Providence, that Mr. Bray and Mr. Eells, the Clergymen of two adjoining parishes, and classmates in College, were buried the same day.*

A Narrative on the Subject of Missions, for the Year 1808; *and a Statement of the Funds of the Missionary Society of Connecticut. Published by the Trustees of the Society.*

READERS AND BRETHREN,

THE Trustees of the Missionary Society of Connecticut now lay before you their tenth annual Narrative, on the subject of Missions. By inspection of this you will perceive, that the people of God have no cause of discouragement in missionary pursuits. A desirable number of laborers in the gospel vineyard has been found, whom the Lord has rendered able and willing to go forth proclaiming the unsearchable riches of a Saviour's love. By means of their zeal and fidelity, many of your Christian neighbors and brethren, in the new settlements, have been led to rejoice in holy edification and comfort; and some who were foes to God have had their eyes opened on the deadly danger of self-hardening against him—have thrown down the weapons of their hostility, and cordially yielded to the divine government and laws.

No portion of the vast missionary field, in the United States, is supposed to have stronger claims to missionary attention, than the Connecticut Western Reserve. It is calculated, that, upon that tract, there are not far from twelve thousand people; and there has been, before the present year, but one settled minister of the congregational or presbyterian denomination. Its great distance has rendered it impossible for the Trustees to employ as many laborers there as they have wished. But their prospects, in that district, are brightening.

The Rev. Messrs. Abraham Scott and Jonathan Lesslie have wrought in that field, almost the whole, and the Rev. William Wick, a part, of the present season. From Mr. Wick, however, no journals have been received.

Mr. Scott, after describing the variety of characters that compose the population of that country, and stating as an argument of great strength for increased missionary exertions in their

behalf, the awful stupidity of many—the dangerous heresies of others—and the open and blasphemous infidelity of a few, has the following remarks:

'Although, on the one hand, there are many things here truly 'distressing, yet, on the other, there are some, that are encour-'aging. I find, that, even among the worst, there are some, 'who, at times, are not past feeling. They appear willing to hear 'what may be said against them. Not only the seriously inclin-'ed, but many others, also, profess, and in many respects evi-'dence, a desire for the gospel.

'I have been almost universally received and treated, by all 'sorts, since I came into this country, with the greatest civility 'and friendship. There has been an unexpected attention to, 'and in many places, an apparent solemnity and feeling under, 'preaching. Inquiries have frequently been made respecting 'the prospects of other missionaries coming into this country. 'I trust I need not mention the arrangements, that have been 'made, in almost all the churches here, to have the gospel stated-'ly among them. Many settlements, that are yet unable to sup-'port preaching statedly among them, have evinced a desire to 'have it occasionally, at their own expense.'

In another communication he says, 'There is, in general, here, 'at least professedly, a desire for the gospel. In many places 'they have attempted, and appear still willing to do, as much as 'their circumstances will admit, to have it, either statedly or oc-'casionally. In some places, where they are not, at present, able 'to support it statedly, they have attempted to obtain occasional 'supplies, though with little success. In others, where they are 'able to support it, at least a considerable part of the time, they 'have attempted it, apparently to very little purpose.'

The extreme difficulty of obtaining suitable preachers has been the uniform cause of their disappointments.

Mr. Scott further observes, 'Some seem to be brought to prize 'the gospel and gospel ordinances, by the want of them, more, 'perhaps, than they ever did before. They appear solicitously to 'look up to you, as under Christ, the great head of the Church, 'to sympathize with them, and still continue to do for them in 'this respect, thankful for what you have done—at the same time 'not doubting, but you are using your utmost efforts, for their 'spiritual welfare. Missionaries being but few, and the settle-'ments numerous, they are almost as sheep without a shep-'herd.'

During the present season, to the date of Mr. Scott's last communication, he had preached one hundred and twenty sermons, in New Connecticut, had four times administered the sacrament of the Lord's supper and baptized twenty one.

On the 13th of March, the Rev. Jonathan Lesslie began missionary service in New Connecticut. In his first communication to the secretary, he observes, 'I visit the schools and find them 'in tolerably good order. In most of them the Holy Scriptures

'are read, a part of the time ; and some attention is paid to the 'shorter catechism, though not so much as I could wish. This 'perhaps is owing, in some measure, to the want of books.

'I state with pleasure, that the people have, without a single 'exception, received me with tokens of respect, as a preacher of 'the gospel, but more especially as one sent by your Society. The 'attention which is paid to preaching, in every place where I have 'been, is a very great encouragement to me in my labors. I be-'lieve we are not to expect much open opposition from any on 'the Reserve. The enemies of the religion of Jesus find, that to 'oppose it, destroys their popularity.'

There having been no ordained ministers on the Reserve, except the one already mentioned, and he having only a small part of his charge in that district, it was thought peculiarly necessary, that the missionaries there receive authority to administer gospel ordinances. The Board of Trustees, therefore, at their session, last May, passed the following vote :

'Whereas Messrs. Abraham Scott and Jonathan Lesslie are ap-'pointed to labor, as missionaries in the territory called New Con-'necticut ; and whereas it is expedient, in the opinion of this 'Board, that they should be ordained as Evangelists ;

'Voted, That the presbytery of Ohio be requested to ordain 'them, provided, upon examination, they should be found qualifi-'ed for the work of the ministry.'

Under date of July 20th, Mr. Lesslie observes, 'The Presbytery 'met, June 28th. Mr. Scott and myself were present. Your 'request was considered, and the Presbytery unanimously agreed 'to take us on trial for ordination. They adjourned, to meet on 'July 12th, when we completed our trials, and were ordained. 'The Rev. Andrew Gwin preached the ordination sermon, from '2 Tim. ii. 3. The Rev. John Mc Millan D. D. delivered the 'Charge.'

In letters dated July 24th, Mr. Lesslie again writes, 'Great at-'tention is in many places paid to preaching. Individuals in some 'places are awakened, and enquiring for salvation. Some few 'are lying at the threshold of sovereign mercy, and two or three 'have given recent evidence of having obtained a hope of salva-'tion, through Jesus Christ. This appears to be a seed time, but 'we want the rain. The husbandman may cultivate his ground, and 'sow good seed ; but if God withhold the showers he cannot en-'joy the harvest. Thus, unless the influences of the Holy Spirit 'attend the means of grace, sinners cannot be saved. From this 'consideration, I hope our prayers will continually ascend, 'united with those of our Eastern brethren in the Lord, to the 'throne of grace, in behalf of this Western wilderness.'

'I have still the happiness to inform you, that although 'since I entered on my mission, I have lodged in 130 different 'families, yet I have been uniformly received with tokens of res-'pect, as a minister of the gospel ; and especially as one sent by 'your benevolent society.'

Mr. Lesslie, besides performing the various and particular duties of an evangelist, had at the date of his last letters, preached 76 sermons in New Connecticut.

Near the close of last May, the Rev. Enoch Burt was, at the request of the Trustees, ordained an evangelist by Fairfield Eastern District Association, preparatory to a missionary tour thro' New Connecticut. From the labors of that mission he returned, near the end of October.

'I have preached,' he says, 'on the Reserve, 41 sermons; baptized 27 children and one adult; organized one church; once administered the Lord's supper; and travelled 221 miles. 'As my mission was short, I was desirous of spending as little time in travelling, when on the Reserve, as possible. I therefore preached in every settlement through which I passed, if it were possible to collect the people. You will perceive from my journal, that religion is not as lively, in that country, as it was three or four years since—still the people, in general, are solicitous to have preaching. They express a lively gratitude to the Missionary Society, for their exertions in their behalf.'

It is pleasing to add, that, in several instances, the present year, the people of that country have supplied themselves with regular evangelical preaching, that one minister has been ordained there to a stated pastoral charge, and the General Assembly of the Presbyterian church, in the United States, and the neighboring Presbyteries, have supplied them with several months of missionary service. Thus the Lord, amidst all the secret and open hostility of the adversary, appears there in his glory, and builds up Zion.

In September, the Rev. James Scott was appointed a missionary to labor, in the service of the Society, such a part of the time, as he can be spared from the people of his stated charge, in the town of Granville and its vicinity, in the State of Ohio. Of his undertaking and success, however, in pursuance of this appointment, no accounts have yet been received.

On the whole, in relation to missionary efforts in New Connecticut and parts adjacent, you will perceive, that they are in a train of desirable prosperity and success.

About the middle of last January, the Rev. Aaron Cleveland commenced a missionary tour, through the Northern counties of Vermont. He returned in May, having, in the evangelical service assigned him, visited twenty three towns, preached 83 sermons —twice administered baptism, and four times the Lord's supper.

Although the state of pure religion, in the towns where he labored, is comparatively low, yet the encouragement for missionary exertions in that region is not small.

'In every town, however,' he observes, 'you may find some of God's people, who, though stedfast and immoveable as far as respects themselves, yet having friends and connections of the above description, are prone to exercise towards them that false charity, which makes sincerity the test of true religion. I labored much to set the people of God right, upon this point, which led me to preach several times from Jude 3.

'The deluded religionists above mentioned greatly dislike to see 'missionaries of our order. There are also many who, like Gallio, '*care for none of these things.* Such treat missionaries with a sort of 'half way civility. The greatest part of the people will attend to 'our preaching, at least, on the sabbath, from some kind of res-'pect to the missionary system. There is yet another part, 'perhaps a third, who are with apparent cordiality, the friends of 'Zion. These esteem them highly for their work's sake, and 'gratefully acknowledge the goodness of God in the constituted 'Missionary Societies.

'Such, in general, appear to be the moral feelings of the people 'in Vermont—especially on the north part, which has been con-'sidered as missionary ground.

'Missionaries often, no doubt, leave the ground with the des-'pondency of the Prophet, *Who hath believed our report, and to 'whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?* But, perhaps, there 'may be thousands kept, by the instrumentality of missionaries, 'from bowing the knee to Baal. If, then, by missionary labors, 'even the *form* of godliness be kept up—if some few are brought 'to consider their ways, and turn their feet unto God's testimonies '—and if God's saints are comforted, animated, strengthened, and 'built up—these are arguments, in my humble view, sufficient for 'a perseverance in missionary labors. Let, therefore, the friends 'of Zion *be workers together with God*—and his name have all 'the glory.'

In the North Western parts of Vermont, the Rev. Joel Byington entered on missionary duty, the 3d day of May. During nine weeks, he rode 367 miles, and walked many, where riding was impracticable—preached 43 sermons—visited 87 families, several of which had rarely, and some of them never, been favored with missionary labors—attended 8 religious conferences—visited 10 schools—baptized 5 children—administered the Lord's supper once—and held many conversations with opposers of religion, and with heretics of various denominations.

'Christians,' he remarks, 'manifested comfort from the word, 'and returned thanks for missionary labors. I was received with 'the greatest apparent cordiality, and was treated with every desi-'rable token of respect, courtesy, and civility.'

Last winter, the Rev. Holland Weeks labored, a short time, as a missionary in Vermont. While thus employed, he was called to take the pastoral charge of the church and people in Pittsford. He accepted the call, and was accordingly installed.

Towards the close of the last year, the Rev. John Spencer was appointed to missionary labor, near the South Eastern shore of Lake Erie—as was stated in the Narrative for 1807. There, a few people are scattered over a wide tract of wilderness. Within the space of 70 or 80 miles from the mouth of Canadoway Creek, there is not one settled minister of the congregational or presbyterian denomination. It is, unquestionably, the deplorable fact, that the people have had little or no correct evangelical instruction,

either by missionaries or otherwise, since their settlement in those parts. Mr. Spencer was, in May last, reappointed, and for the term of one year, unless sooner recalled,—to labor in that very destitute region.

December 18th, 1807, he entered on missionary labor, under the direction of the Trustees. He is, probably, now engaged in that employment. He has, from the beginning of his travels, as a missionary, labored with great diligence, and with unquestionable fidelity. With much patience and fortitude he has met and encountered unusual difficulty and fatigue.

'With respect to the state of religion,' he observes, 'there is 'nothing very encouraging. In general, about two thirds of the 'people, in the various settlements, attend meeting on the sabbath '—and they pay a very decent attention to the word spoken—but 'I know not of any special seriousness on any minds. It is the 'direction of the wise man, *In the morning sow thy seed, and in the 'evening withhold not thy hand; for thou knowest not which shall 'prosper, whether this or that; or whether both shall be alike good.* 'Though the inhabitants, in this wilderness, are few, and more 'inattentive to the concerns of their souls than could be reasonably 'expected of rational creatures; yet their souls are precious.'

In a subsequent communication he remarks, 'I find no special 'seriousness on any minds. All the encouragement I have to 'continue preaching, arising from present appearances, is that 'worshipping assemblies increase in numbers, both on week days, 'and on the sabbath.'

Mr. Silas Hubbard was, in September, appointed to missionary service in Camden and its vicinity, near Lake Ontario. His journals, however, have not been received.

On the 23d of November, 1807, the Rev. Israel Brainerd went upon a mission into the counties of Otsego and Delaware, and continued seven weeks. March 16th, 1808, he again entered the same field, and labored six weeks.

'In some places,' he observes, 'there was a special attention to 'religion among the people—and, in almost all the towns which I 'visited, there was a serious and respectful attention paid to the 'preaching of the word. The kindness and hospitality with 'which I was treated, were, in general, highly satisfactory. The 'sober part of the people, and the pious, in particular, appear to 'have a grateful sense of the assistance they receive from the Mis-'sionary Society; and to be filled with joy and gratitude, when 'they hear the glad tidings of the gospel.

'Some churches, in the county of Otsego, which have hereto-'fore received assistance from the missionaries, have been so far 'built up and strengthened, that they have supplied themselves, 'for a considerable part of the time, with the stated preaching of 'the gospel. Though the missionary ground is, in some measure, 'diminished in these counties, yet there is still an abundance of 'room left for exertion, and a great call for gospel instruction.

'The people have generally requested a longer visit than I was 'able to grant. *May the Lord send forth laborers into his harvest!*

'In my tour, I preached 69 sermons—attended 8 conferences—'administered the sacrament three times—baptized 4 adults and '11 children—and attended 3 funerals, besides visiting a great 'number of families, and some schools.

'The word spoken, in a number of instances, made serious 'impressions upon the minds of some, as I was afterwards in-'formed. May the whole, in due time, *take root downward, and 'bear fruit upward!* My hearers and my labors I leave in the 'hands of a kind providence, trusting, that the great Head of the 'church will make his word efficacious, as far as is for his own 'glory, and the good of his kingdom."

Mr. Ebenezer I. Leavenworth spent 4 months, as a Missionary, in the settlements upon Black River. 'During this time, he says, 'I travelled about 800 miles—visited 170 families and 9 schools '—attended 7 conferences—and preached about 100 sermons. 'I also attended several meetings of other descriptions.

'In that country, there has been but little special attention 'to religion. In two or three places, the people have been, in a 'degree, awakened; and there have been some hopeful conver-'sions. Society, in general, grows more regular, and the people 'more inclined to attend religious meetings.'

In May, the Rev. Calvin Ingals began missionary labor, near Lake George, and travelled, Northerly and Westerly, through the counties of Franklin and St. Lawrence, until he reached the settlements on Black River. He went 1140 miles—preached 108 sermons—four times administered the Lord's supper—admitted 11 to the fellowship and communion of the churches—and baptized 33, 6 adults and 27 children.

He says, 'As I called on serious christians and made myself 'known to them, as a missionary, their countenances instantly 'brightened, and their hearts apparently leaped for joy.—The peo-'ple generally appeared pleased with the missionary cause, and 'expressed a high sense of obligation and of gratitude for the kind 'services they received from Missionary Societies. They also, 'generally, expressed a wish, that they might yet be remembered 'and further assisted by them.

'The circuit, through which I have travelled, the season past, 'is extensive, and the people are generally unable to support the 'gospel among them. But none are more so than the counties 'of Franklin and St. Lawrence. In these, the settlements are 'new, and the people generally in debt for their lands. But that, 'which renders them most unable to support the gospel, is, their 'being split up into sects. This renders the situation of the few 'churches and serious christians there deplorable—and further 'exertions and assistance from missionaries necessary.'

Mr. Mark Mead accomplished a mission of 4 months, beginning in July. He labored in the counties of Delaware, Otsego, and Herkimer. He travelled about 540 miles—preached 71 sermons

—attended 15 conferences—and was diligent in family visits, carefully embracing every opportunity of administering admonition and instruction in the things that pertain to salvation.

Near the beginning of July, the Rev. David Harrower commenced a missionary tour. Between that time and the middle of November, he performed the service of 13 weeks. He spent a small part of the season in the county of Broome, state of New-York—but the most of it in Pennsylvania, counties of Wayne and Luzerne. He travelled nearly 800 miles—preached 90 sermons—formed a church in the town of Salem, county of Wayne—baptized a number of adults and children—twice administered the Lord's supper—admitted several to the communion and fellowship of the christian church—attended conferences and church meetings; and, in family visits, gave such counsel and instruction as all families need. 'I was cordially received,' says Mr. Harrower, '—was heard with much attention—and some instances of con-'viction appeared.—On a general view of the time spent in the 'mission, I humbly hope it has not been lost.'

The Rev. Ebenezer Kingsbury, about the beginning of July, commenced a missionary tour, through the counties of Otsego, Delaware, and Chenango. He writes, 'I have, hitherto, been 'treated with kindness and attention. There is a disposition to 'hear. Christians appear to be comforted; and, in some instan-'ces, sinners are awakened. The people of Delaware County 'are in a divided and scattered situation. Sectarians abound, and 'many seem thoughtless of the one thing needful. It is proper 'missionary ground.'

From the Rev. Seth Williston, a missionary of long and very useful experience, journals, of service performed under the direction of the Society, have been received, down to the 29th of July. Between the first week in November, 1807, and the beginning of August, 1808, he performed missionary duty 25 weeks, in the counties of New-York, on the upper branches of the Susquehanna, and in the Northern counties of Pennsylvania. He visited many places, where the attention of people was alive, on the subject of religion and the great salvation. He likewise visited many, where very little appeared, but lamentable stupidity, or dangerous errors, concerning matters of the highest conceivable moment. He labored with much evidence of success, in awakening the thoughtless—in convincing the deceived—in encouraging and confirming the saints, amidst trials calculated to shake their faith, and check their zeal—and administering the only satisfying and permanent consolation to the distressed and mourning.

He says, 'I think I have felt the importance of the missionary 'aid afforded to these new settlements, of late, as much as ever; 'not only for the sake of supplying the destitute, but also for the 'sake of counteracting the baneful influence of error. I think *my 'spirit has been stirred within me*, when I have seen how large a 'proportion of the people, in some of these settlements, are re-'jecting the doctrines of grace, which are the only hope of fallen

'creatures; and when I have found, that, in many places, they 'have teachers, who strengthen their natural prejudices against 'the truth.'

The Rev. Messrs. Salmon King, Erastus Ripley, and Chauncey Lee, have lately gone, as missionaries, into the Northern counties of Vermont and New-York. Others, it is expected, will soon engage in the same important work.

Much missionary service has also been recently performed, and is now performing, in districts so remote, as to render impossible an account of them in this Narrative. Be it sufficient to add here, that the Trustees have, the present year, distributed, among the needy in the new settlements, a greater number of pious books than they have found the means of distributing in any former season.

An account of the books distributed, the present year, in the new settlements—and a statement of the funds belonging to the Missionary Society of Connecticut—will be found annexed to this Narrative. Although several sources of income, enjoyed in past years, have now ceased, yet the Lord has disposed individuals to contribute, to the purposes of this benevolent institution, portions of the substance he gave them for use. The time would fail to mention many particulars. One, however, especially deserves to be recorded in these pages. Perhaps a more correct view of the fact cannot be exhibited, than by inserting an extract from the Minutes of the Board, at a meeting specially convened by the chairman, at the state house in Hartford, May 19th, 1808.

"Voted, that the Rev. Jedidiah Morse, D.D. and Asher Adams, 'both of Charlestown, Mass. be, and they hereby are, appointed 'attornies, on the behalf of this board, to receive, from the executors of the last will and testament of Richard Devens, Esq. late 'of Charlestown, deceased, the sum of Five Hundred Dollars, 'which said executors, by request of the residuary legatees of said 'Devens propose to pay, from said Devens's estate, to the Missionary Society of Connecticut, in addition to ten shares in the 'Fire and Marine Insurance Corporation, in Boston, bequeathed 'by said Devens to said Missionary Society, as an equivalent for 'the reduction of the value of said shares at the decease of the testator, from their value at the time the said will was executed: 'And that they, the said Morse and Adams, be requested to remit 'the said money to the treasurer of this society, whenever they 'shall receive the same from said executors.

'Voted, that the thanks of this board be presented to the residuary legatees of the late Richard Devens, Esq. of Charlestown, 'Mass. and to the executors of the last will and testament of said 'Devens, for their having generously agreed to pay, to the Missionary Society of Connecticut, the sum of Five Hundred Dollars, 'from the estate of said Devens, in addition to ten shares in the 'Fire and Marine Insurance Corporation, in Boston, bequeathed 'by him to said Society.'

The Trustees think it, likewise, proper to insert, for the consi-

deration of the Missionary Society, the following extract, from the minutes of their session, the 7th of September.

'Voted, that the following alteration, in the Constitution of the 'Missionary Society of Connecticut, be proposed to the Society, at 'their session to be holden in Lebanon, the 3d Tuesday of June 'next, viz. That in the eleventh and twelfth articles of the consti-'tution, the word August be substituted in the place of the word 'September.'

And now, readers and brethren, you observe how large and animating is the account of missionary labors performed, and of their happy effects experienced, which the Trustees here put into your hands. They feel strong confidence, that, in the contemplation of these things, your joy will be one with theirs; and that you will cordially join them, in ascribing all the praise to Him, whose boundless grace has enabled them to accomplish so much for both the present comfort and eternal well being of souls, that were ready to perish. To be ambitious of unceasing instrumentality in *such labors of love* is, indeed, to be ambitious *as Christians.* By prayer, then—by worldly substance—by example in every possible way—let all come forward *to the help of the Lord.* Let all be ambitious to do good, by every talent conferred, and, for the use of which, there is, at hand, a day of reckoning, that is infinitely strict and awful.

It is, also, with high satisfaction, that the Trustees mention here the increasing prosperity and usefulness, the present year, of other missionary institutions in our land. Nor can they, in this place, refrain from noticing, with inexpressible joy, the great and numerous revivals of solemn and saving attention to religion, both in the old settlements of our country and in the new. Animating to the friends of Emanuel are the good tidings, which often and from various places, arrive, announcing the triumphs of grace. What, brethren, more encouraging, can be desired, as a foundation of hope for our beloved country, in a day of perplexity and distress, than the certainty, that the Lord is diffusing a spirit of evangelical supplication, and adding to the number of those who pray!

JOHN TREADWELL, *Chairman.*

Passed by the Board of Trustees,
January 4, 1809.

Attest,

ABEL FLINT, *Secretary.*

A STATEMENT
OF THE FUNDS OF THE MISSIONARY SOCIETY OF CONNECTICUT, JANUARY 1, 1809.

NO. 1.

Account of Sums contributed in the several Congregational Societies in the State of Connecticut, for the support of Missions, on the first Sabbath of May 1808, *pursuant to a Resolve of the General Assembly of said State, passed May* 1807.

HARTFORD COUNTY.	$	
HARTFORD, West Society,	26	60
Berlin, New Britain,	17	4
Worthington,	10	14
Bristol,	15	22
Burlington,	7	99
Canton,	24	35
East Hartford, First,	20	0
Orford,	10	85
East Windsor, First,	9	85
Second,	19	26
Farmington, First,	81	0
Northington,	8	54
Glastenbury, First,	19	35
Hartland, East,	6	0
West,	5	75
Marlborough,	7	31
Southington,	14	0
Suffield, First,	11	32
West,	3	34
Simsbury,	13	32
Weathersfield, First,	64	0
Newington,	13	35
Stepney,	21	42
Windsor, First,	17	0
Wintonbury,	11	38
Dollars,	458	38

NEW-HAVEN COUNTY.		
New-Haven, Brick,	72	46
United,	50	0
West Haven,	14	50
Branford, First Society,	9	45
Cheshire, First,	7	90
Columbia,	3	0
Derby, First,	3	90
Great Hill,	5	26
East Haven,	7	51
Guilford, First,	17	10
North,	6	71
Hamden, Mount Carmel,	10	0
East Plains,	4	85
Milford, First,	32	40
Second,	20	85
Merriden,	8	20
Middlebury,	6	3
North Haven,	12	7
Southbury, First,	8	82
South Britain,	8	0
Wallingford, First,	4	47
Waterbury, Salem,	6	73
Woodbridge, Amity,	11	48
Bethany,	1	60
Wolcott,	6	0
Dollars,	339	29

NEW-LONDON COUNTY.		
New-London,	86	0
Norwich, First,	35	70
Chelsea,	31	0
Bozrah,	4	0
Colchester, First,	14	74
Franklin,	8	97
Lisbon, Newent,	9	0
Hanover,	2	85
Lyme, First,	8	4
Montville, First,	8	84
Preston, North,	33	6
Dollars,	242	20

FAIRFIELD COUNTY.		
Fairfield, First Society,	27	14
Greensfarms,	17	39
Danbury, First,	25	0
Greenwich, West,	35	50
Huntington, Ripton,	3	89
New Stratford,	5	54
Brookfield,	6	63
New Fairfield,	5	0
Newtown,	4	8
New Canaan,	37	0
Norwalk,	21	25
Redding,	8	65
Ridgfield, First,	4	56

Stamford, First,	22	0
North Stamford,	6	36
Stanwich,	10	50
Sherman,	5	0
Trumbull,	5	0
Weston, Norfield,	2	2
North Fairfield,	3	0
Wilton,	12	65
Dollars,	268	16

WINDHAM COUNTY.

Windham, First Society,	9	0
Scotland,	5	50
Ashford, Westford,	3	50
Brooklyn,	3	6
Canterbury, First,	3	35
Westminster,	4	66
Hampton,	17	0
Killingly, Third,	1	33
Lebanon, First,	42	15
Goshen,	3	12
Exeter,	3	43
Mansfield, First,	14	50
North,	8	75
Plainfield,	5	40
Pomfret, First,	6	31
Abington,	9	0
Thompson,	5	23
Woodstock, First,	8	9
Muddy Brook,	13	80
West,	3	0
Dollars,	170	19

LITCHFIELD COUNTY.

Litchfield, First Society,	37	89
Southfarms,	14	50
Barkhemsted, First,	5	9
Winsted,	17	19
Bethlem,	25	6
Canaan, First,	14	61
Second,	7	0
Colebrook,	13	87
Cornwall, First,	17	86
Goshen,	44	0
Harwington,	7	50
Kent,	10	0
New Milford,	14	0
Norfolk,	34	12
Plymouth,	6	34
Roxbury,	8	63
Salisbury,	14	0
Sharon, First,	15	0
Torrington, First,	18	0
Torringford,	15	56
Warren,	23	73
Washington, First,	27	50
New Preston,	10	22
Winchester,	12	86
Woodbury,	16	35
Dollars,	430	88

MIDDLESEX COUNTY.

Middletown, First Society,	24	59
Upper Houses,	7	38
Haddam,	13	28
Chatham, First,	6	13
Middle Haddam,	3	94
Durham,	11	86
East Haddam, First,	14	50
Millington,	16	75
Hadlyme,	9	14
Killingworth, First,	2	5
Saybrook, First,	6	66
Second,	9	76
Third,	5	0
Fourth,	8	0
Dollars,	139	04

TOLLAND COUNTY.

Tolland,	9	0
Coventry, First,	9	40
North,	8	75
Andover,	7	68
Bolton, First,	52	0
North,	13	0
Ellington,	22	0
Somers,	16	0
Willington,	6	35
Dollars,	144	18

SUMMARY.

HARTFORD COUNTY,	458	38
NEW HAVEN,	339	29
NEW LONDON,	242	20
FAIRFIELD,	268	16
WINDHAM,	170	19
LITCHFIELD,	430	88
MIDDLESEX,	139	4
TOLLAND,	144	18
Dollars,	2192	32

No. 2.

FUNDS of the Society, arising from other sources than the Contributions in May, 1808.

1808. *Contributions of May* 1807, *received since January* 1, 1808, viz.

January	5.	Canaan,	$ 10		
	18.	Colebrook,	10		
May	19.	Middletown, First Society,	13	81	
		Stratford, First,	3	25	
					37 06

Contributions in the New Settlements, viz.

January	1.	To Rev. Joseph Vaill,	19	35	
May	17.	Rev. Israel Brainerd	2		
August	30.	Rev. Joel Byington,	6	49	
Sept.	16.	Mr. Ebenezer I. Leavenworth,	8	30	
Oct.	17.	Rev. Calvin Ingals,	17	23	
Nov.	16.	Mr. Mark Mead,	6	50	
Dec.	16.	Rev. David Harrower,	8	50	
					68 37

Contributions from sundry Female Societies, viz.

May	10.	Litchfield Female Association,	31	61	
		Hampton Cent Society,	11	41	
	13.	Female Society in Woodbury,	7	37	
	17.	Windham Female Charitable Society,	7	12	
Dec.	16.	Willington Female Association,	10	50	
					68 01

Sundry Donations, viz.

April	1.	From the Church in Stonington,	12	50	
May	12.	Cinda Baldwin, a Legacy,	30		
	13.	a young Lady in Woodbridge,	0	25	
	16.	a friend of Missions,	1		
	16.	do. in Killingly,	0	45	
					44 20

Avails of Books, viz.

January	1.	Summary of Christian Doctrine,	94		
Nov.		Connecticut Evangelical Magazine,	2080	19	
Dec.	30.	Dwight's Psalms and Hymns,	200		
					2374 19
Dec.	31.	Interest on Notes and Bonds,			1623 54 1-2
			$		4215 37 1-2

No. 3.

Disbursements by order of the Trustees.

1808. *To Missionaries*, viz.

January	1.	To Rev. Joseph Vaill,	Missionary to	Black River,	$ 72
	8.	Rev. Aaron Cleaveland,	do.	Vermont,	40
	11.	Rev. Israel Brainerd,	do.	Otsego and Del.	40
	26.	Rev. Holland Weeks,	do.	Vermont,	16
Feb.	4.	Rev. John Spencer,	do.	New York,	40
March	1.	Rev. Seth Williston,	do.	N. York & Penn.	87
	2.	Rev. Henry Chapman,	do.	Otsego and Del.	30
	14.	Mr. Ebenezer I. Leavenworth,	do.	Black River,	40
	22.	Rev. Aaron Cleaveland,	do.	Vermont,	40
April	13.	Rev. Calvin Ingals,	do.	New York,	40
	20.	Rev. Israel Brainerd,	do.	Otsego and Del.	10
May	3.	Rev. John Spencer,	do.	New York,	88
	13.	Rev. Israel Brainerd,	do.	Otsego and Del.	54
	16.	Rev. Aaron Cleaveland,	do.	Vermont,	48
	17.	Rev. Jonathan Lesslie,	do.	New Conn.	56
June	28.	Rev. David Harrower,	do.	N. York & Penn.	25
	30.	Rev Seth Williston.	do.	do.	30
		Mr. Mark Mead,	do.	Otsego and Del.	20
July	21.	Rev. Abraham Scott,	do.	New Conn.	112
Aug.	23.	Rev. David Harrower,	do.	N. York & Penn.	15
	30.	Rev. Joel Bvington,	do.	Vermont,	72
Sep.	2.	Rev. Seth Williston,	do.	N York. & Penn.	16
	9.	Rev. John Spencer,	do.	New York,	100
	19.	Mr. Eben. I. Leavenworth,	do.	Black River,	88
	21.	Rev. David Higgins,	do.	New York,	16
Oct.	3.	Rev. David Harrower,	do.	N. York & Penn.	20
	11.	Rev. Calvin Ingals,	do.	New York,	34
	17.	do.	do.	do.	94
	25.	Rev. Enoch Burt,	do.	New Conn.	38
	28.	Rev. Israel Brainerd,	do.	Black River,	40
Nov.	2.	Rev. Erastus Ripley,	do.	Vermont,	40
		Rev. Chauncey Lee,	do.	do.	40
	5.	Rev. Seth Williston,	do.	N York & Penn.	37
	11.	Mr. Silas Hubbard,	do.	Camden, &c.	40
	16.	Mr. Mark Mead,	do.	Otsego and Del.	108
	29.	Rev. William Storrs,	do.	Vermont,	12
Dec.	16.	Rev. David Harrower,	do.	N: York & Penn.	44
					1742

Other Expenses in the Course of the year, viz.

Expenses attending sending books to new settlements, viz.

For Magazines 1077 Dolls. 50 Cents. which was paid back to the Treasurer, and appropriated to permanent fund, as avails of the Magazine,	1077 50	
For other Books,	82	
For binding and labelling Magazines,	144 50	
For Boxes and packing Books,	8 01	
For transportation of Books,	97 52	
For rent of a room in which to deposit Books,	18	
		1427 53
For printing and distributing Narratives,		24
To Andrew Kingsbury, Esq. his Salary as Treasurer,		100
To Solomon Smith, Esq. for assisting the Treasurer,		2 50

For a Receipt Book for the Treasurer,	3 75
To Rev. Abel Flint, his Salary as Auditor and Secretary,	100
To do. for stationary and postage,	25 66
To do. expenses for entertaining the Trustees,	8
	$ 3433 44

No. 4.

Treasurer's Account Current.

Dr. { The Missionary Society of Connecticut, in Account Currrent with Andrew Kingsbury, as their Treasurer. } Cr.

To Amount of Cash paid by order of the Committee, of Accts. as per statement, No. 3. - - -	3433 44	By balance in favor of the Society, Jan. 1, 1808,	29153 78
To balance, carried to credit of new Account, -	32128 03	By Contributions in May, 1808, as per Statement No. 1. - - - - -	2192 32
	$ 35561 47	By donations, interest, &c. as per statement No. 2.	4215 37
			$ 35561 47
Amount of permanent Fund, - - - - -	22462 86	By balance of the above Account, - - -	$ 32128 03
For current Expenses, -	9665 17		
	$ 32128 03		

A. KINGSBURY, *Treasurer to the M. S. of Con.*

ABEL FLINT, *Auditor.*

Hartford, December 31, 1808.

A particular List of the Contributions received in the new settlements, contained in the general statement, No. 2.

To Rev. Joseph Vaill in the Black River country,		To Rev. Israel Brainerd, in the counties of Otsego and Delaware,	2 00
At Leyden,	2 65		
Do.	3 24	To Rev. Joel Byington in Vermont.	
Of Sheldon Johnson,	50	At Swanton,	4
Capt. Northum,	50	Of Mrs. Smith,	1
At Amsterdam,	2 54	Bildad Hubbel,	1
Harrison,	2 34	Sundry persons,	0 49
Rutland hollow,	87		6 49
Harrisburg,	1 31		
Lowville,	2 05		
Brownville,	1 60	To Mr. Ebenezer I. Leavenworth, at sundry places in the Black River settlements,	8 30
Turin,	1 75		
	19 35		

To Rev. Calvin Ingals, in the State of New-York.	
At Sandy Hill,	1 41
Bolton,	2 52
Chester,	2 07
Madrid,	5 28
Of Benjamin Raymond,	1
Amos Brownson,	0 75
At Stockholm,	4 20
	17 23

To Mr. Mark Mead, at sundry places in the counties of Otsego and Delaware,	6 50
To Rev. David Harrower, at sundry places in N. York & Penn.	8 50

Donations of Books.

From a riend of Missions, 50 Connecticut Evangelical Magazine, and Religious Inteligencer, for 1808.
From Do. 1000 Pamphlets on Marriage.
From Nathaniel Lambert, Esq. 12 Testaments.

A List of Books sent to the new settlements in the course of the year

Bound Books, *viz.*	
704	Vols. Connecticut Evangelical Magazine.
42	Trumbull on Divine Revelation.
24	Washburn's Sermons.
24	Bibles.
24	Henry on Prayer.
12	Testaments.
12	Bunyan's Grace Abounding.
1	Doddridge's Rise and Progress.
843	

Pamphlets and Children's Books.	
172	Single numbers Conn. Evangelical Magazine.
900	Summary of Christian Doctrine.
900	Sermons on Christ the Bread of Life.
500	Pamphlets on Marriage.
100	Sermons to Children.
100	Friendly Instructor.
100	Care of the Soul.
48	Watt's Divine Songs.
3663	
9533	Sent in preceding years.
13196	Total number of Books sent to the new settlements.

Officers of the Missionary Society of Connecticut.

Trustees.——His Honor *John Treadwell*, The Honorable *Roger Newberry*, The Hon. *Aaron Austin*, The Hon. *Jonathan Brace*, The Hon. *John Davenport*, *Enoch Perkins*, Esq. The Rev. Messrs. *Nathan Perkins* D. D. *Elijah Parsons*,* *Samuel Nott*, *Calvin Chapin*, *Samuel J. Mills*, and *Moses C. Welch*.

Andrew Kingsbury, Esq. Treasurer. Rev. *Abel Flint*, Auditor.

His Honor *John Treadwell*, Chairman, and the Rev. *Abel Flint*, Secretary of the Board of Trustees.

Committee of Missions. Hon. *Jona. Brace*, *Enoch Perkins*, Esq. Rev. Messrs. *Nathan Perkins*, D.D. *M. C. Welch*, *Samuel Nott*, and *Abel Flint*.

Committee of Accounts. Hon. *Jonathan Brace*, *Enoch Perkins*, Esq. and the Rev. *Abel Flint*.

Fund Committee. His honor *John Treadwell*, Hon. *Roger Newberry*, Hon. *Jonathan Brace*, *Enoch Perkins*, Esq. and *Andrew Kingsbury*, Esq.

Book Committee. Hon. *Jonathan Brace*, *Enoch Perkins*, Esq. Rev. Messrs. *Nathan Perkins*, D. D. and *Abel Flint*.

* Mr. Parsons has resigned his trusteeship.

On the unsearchable existence of God.

WHEN supreme Godhead is the subject of enquiry, our minds ought to be reverent. Rash assertion in treating any sacred subject is criminal; in a description of original Deity, by whose will all things exist, it increases the great guilt, and is attended with evil consequences to mankind, for which the best intentions will never make an adequate atonement. The patriarch Jacob awaking from sleep in which he had a vision of God, said, "How dreadful is this place!" A similar solemnity becomes us while we meditate on the deep things of his nature, and search the character drawn in his inspired word. In many things, human curiosity rises above our powers of comprehension, and needs a pious check. To discern the limits of human understanding, and neither affirm or deny beyond our powers of knowledge, is perhaps the most difficult of all scientific attainments, and is a subject, when well understood, which furnishes the best guide to judicious and safe opinions.

If the labor bestowed on subjects wholly too great for men, had been directed within the sphere of our comprehension, and to mark the boundaries of useful and possible knowledge, it would have prevented many unintelligible opinions, which, being mingled with plainer truth, give a shade of obscurity to the whole. Such were many of the scholastic definitions, in past ages, formed by the arbitrary rules of logical demonstration, and thro' presumption or misguided zeal, applied to the most incomprehensible of all subjects.

The nature of Deity, and perhaps the influence of this in every instance, is not yet wholly wiped away from the common manner of Christian description. Human certainty, concerning the nature and attributes of existence when left to our own powers of discovery, never goes farther than experience, much observation, and divine revelation: All beyond these limits is conjectural! Arguing from analogy or a supposed likeness between finite natures, we may form many probable opinions of creatures distinct beyond acquaintance and observation: But determining in this manner of the supreme being is altogether unwarrantable.—Between an infinite and finite nature, between infinite and finite powers or qualities there is so great a dissimilarity, that arguing from one to the other must ever be uncertain and often absurd. Our opinions of the Supreme efficient must therefore be taken from such accounts as he hath been pleased to communicate of himself, and in making such communications his wisdom hath doubtless regard to our powers of apprehending. It is from the weakness of our own intellects, that the godhead is so much hid from our knowledge, and there are moral reasons to suppose, that whatever can be known, whatever can in description be brought down to our capacity is contained in his word. This character as it stands revealed is incomprehensible. When displayed to our understanding in the best manner, we see a propriety that so glorious a being should be the

author and supreme governor of the world; we see the necessity of such power to control the scene; we see effects worthy an infinite cause; but still what it is to be self-existent—what to have knowledge, presence and power beyond all limits, no being but Deity understands. Men do not comprehend any thing of themselves greater than the sphere of their own existence and action. Finite qualities both natural and moral are clear in our conception. Knowledge, presence, power, truth and love, as they exist in men are known by every mind, and the way in which we form our best apprehensions of godhead, is by conceiving those qualities in their greatest purity, and then denying all limits to their force and extension, so that by the utmost exertion of human intelligence we only form a negative idea of the supreme immensity; and to be positive further than is revealed either of divine energies or operations betrays ignorance of the venerable subject which is considered.

If in the most glorious existence there be powers and operations which bear no kind of affinity to any finite quality or power in creatures, they must be wholly inconceivable by the human mind. That manner of existence which admits ineffable attributes, which receives the ascriptions peculiar to godhead must be wonderful and greater than all imagination. The holy scriptures assert the supreme existence, agency and will, but never in a single instance attempt, to teach us how his adorable nature exists. As heaven is high above the earth, so is this subject above the idea and reasoning of men, and if it were not, Jehovah would not be God. Every human reasoning, either upon the simplicity or composition of an infinite nature which contains all possible energy and goodness, is only aguing from the character of creatures, to the existence of a God. Attending to the holy oracles, we find that human language even in direction of the inspiring Spirit, labors under the great effort of bringing down so high a subject to be within the reach of men's conceptions; to go beyond this is darkening counsel by words without knowledge.

When Moses from the burning bush, received commission to address Pharaoh, and lead his oppressed brethren out of Egypt, the most high called himself the God of their fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Sensible that human curiosity would require a farther description of the being by whom he was authorized; the prophet desired to be taught what he should answer when the name and nature of his God was demanded. To this inquiry he was answered, *I am that I am*, and thou shalt tell this people *I am* hath sent thee. This name is generally rendered Jehovah, and signifies self-existence, a peculiar attribute of godhead.

In this description of himself, supreme wisdom did not attempt to unfold his essential nature, or the manner in which he exists and acts; but as the best account which could be given to a finite mind, as the best claim to their confidence and reverence, as the highest mark of distinction between himself and the character men had given to their idol Gods, described a being self-

originated and self-supported—within himself, and by the constitution of his nature, eternally possessed of all existing and efficient power, in an infinite fulness. Such is the construction of every finite nature—such are all our feelings and experience of them, as leads us back to some producing supporting cause. When the idea of self-existence is revealed to the mind, we see the propriety of such a power the source of being, but what it is to be self-existent, and what are the living efficient principles of such a nature, no faculty of the human mind can even conjecture. The same inscrutability attends every attribute of godhead. Power without suspension or limits, and capable of every great event, which is produced through all spaces of immensity; knowledge of every actual and possible event; a manner of existence, from which is excluded all beginning and ending as conceived by creatures; and an eternal infinitude in all the attributes and exercises of his own existence, are descriptions of the supreme nature in his holy word.

To assist our conceptions of the divine moral rectitude, it is proper we should first consider that peculiar mode of existence revealed in the holy scriptures, which in the language of Christians hath commonly been called, the trinity of godhead.

Unfortunately this doctrine hath been made the cause of more dissension, more presumptuous description, and more infidelity than any other peculiar truth of the Christian system. To intermeddle with opposing sentiments which terminate in mere speculation is unwise, and if the doctrine of a divine trinity were of this kind, both charity and prudence would advise never to renew the animosity with which theologians have strove to accommodate to their own conceptions this inscrutable manner of the supreme existence.

On this fundamental doctrine the moral and mediatorial systems are established, by which means it becomes of high importance in the Christian religion. How far men may have just ideas of the gospel, in a very few respects, while in disbelief of the doctrine, I am unable to say, but think it certain they cannot see that distinguishing glory of the system by which it is sufficient for the salvation of sinners.

The nature and powers of the mediatorial character was one of the first points which became controversial between professing Christians, and by the contending parties a gradation of sentiment hath been advanced from the supporters of his being a mere man, to that of unsearchable and most glorious godhead. All will see a connection between the doctrines of Christ's divine nature, and the trinity of godhead, and this is one reason why a belief of the latter becomes so important. If the gospel mediator be a mere creature, the grandeur and the benefits of an evangelical dispensation, must sink in our opinion, and the whole appear like a forced endeavor to save sinners, when forgiveness might have been bestowed with more dignity without the intervention of a gospel. If the gospel mediator be a divine person, his

character must be formed upon the trinitarian hypothesis; and all who have this honorable opinion of the Saviour, maintain the triune existence.

It is not my design to enter into a laborious proof of the doctrine, but simply to state it with the diffidence which believes, but doth not attempt to comprehend, and to point out its usefulness in enlarging our conceptions of God, and the manner of his divine administration by which a universe of creatures is made happy. In the Old Testament this description of the Supreme existence is less frequent and explicit, and though the doctrine be less fairly traced in this, we may draw many substantial proofs of its truth from the Hebrew books.—When the incarnation took place, and the mystery hid from ages was to be revealed, the knowledge of a divine trinity was necessary for just apprehensions of the moral and gracious exhibition. The doctrine was now drawn into view, and from this period we find it asserted in plain terms, and made a principal article of Christian belief. Had men been left to form their own opinions of this great truth from the representation of holy scripture, without the refinements of philosophy, and explanatory creeds of human composition, formed in those days when the powers and limits of men's understanding were little known, I conceive there would never have been so warm an opposition to the truth. Let a person who is unprejudiced, who hath joined no party, and who justly conceives the necessary unsearchableness of the Supreme Being, read the holy oracles with candid attention, and think he will find that the peculiar manner of divine subsistence, which we mean by the Trinity, is plainly asserted in many passages, and implied in innumerable others.

That the Father, Son, and Spirit, are in some respects described to be distinct, and performing distinct offices in the agency of creation and redemption, that in their personal character they have the descriptions of perfect and most glorious is certain.—That to the Father, Son, and Spirit, divine names, infinite prerogatives and works are ascribed, and that all this is descriptive, not merely of different divine exhibitions, but of an ineffable manner of existence cannot be denied. This is all which can be understood and believed by men. In such conclusion the Almighty is not represented one and three in the same sense and manner, but in some manner which is most glorious for himself, and most beneficial to the universe.

The word person hath come into general use in designating the Father, Son and Spirit; when applied to this subject it hath an appropriate and different meaning, from its use when applied to creatures; in the latter case, it implies distinct and separate existence; in the other a mode of existing peculiar to godhead. This great truth is revealed to our faith in the holy oracles, not with any attempt to point out the form of connection between the Father and Son, and every attempt to explain causes perplexity on a subject which is dark to human understanding merely by its

originated and self-supported—within himself, and by the constitution of his nature, eternally possessed of all existing and efficient power, in an infinite fulness. Such is the construction of every finite nature—such are all our feelings and experience of them, as leads us back to some producing supporting cause. When the idea of self-existence is revealed to the mind, we see the propriety of such a power the source of being, but what it is to be self-existent, and what are the living efficient principles of such a nature, no faculty of the human mind can even conjecture. The same inscrutability attends every attribute of godhead. Power without suspension or limits, and capable of every great event, which is produced through all spaces of immensity; knowledge of every actual and possible event; a manner of existence, from which is excluded all beginning and ending as conceived by creatures; and an eternal infinitude in all the attributes and exercises of his own existence, are descriptions of the supreme nature in his holy word.

To assist our conceptions of the divine moral rectitude, it is proper we should first consider that peculiar mode of existence revealed in the holy scriptures, which in the language of Christians hath commonly been called, the trinity of godhead.

Unfortunately this doctrine hath been made the cause of more dissension, more presumptuous description, and more infidelity than any other peculiar truth of the Christian system. To intermeddle with opposing sentiments which terminate in mere speculation is unwise, and if the doctrine of a divine trinity were of this kind, both charity and prudence would advise never to renew the animosity with which theologians have strove to accommodate to their own conceptions this inscrutable manner of the supreme existence.

On this fundamental doctrine the moral and mediatorial systems are established, by which means it becomes of high importance in the Christian religion. How far men may have just ideas of the gospel, in a very few respects, while in disbelief of the doctrine, I am unable to say, but think it certain they cannot see that distinguishing glory of the system by which it is sufficient for the salvation of sinners.

The nature and powers of the mediatorial character was one of the first points which became controversial between professing Christians, and by the contending parties a gradation of sentiment hath been advanced from the supporters of his being a mere man, to that of unsearchable and most glorious godhead. All will see a connection between the doctrines of Christ's divine nature, and the trinity of godhead, and this is one reason why a belief of the latter becomes so important. If the gospel mediator be a mere creature, the grandeur and the benefits of an evangelical dispensation, must sink in our opinion, and the whole appear like a forced endeavor to save sinners, when forgiveness might have been bestowed with more dignity without the intervention of a gospel. If the gospel mediator be a divine person, his

character must be formed upon the trinitarian hypothesis; and all who have this honorable opinion of the Saviour, maintain the triune existence.

It is not my design to enter into a laborious proof of the doctrine, but simply to state it with the diffidence which believes, but doth not attempt to comprehend, and to point out its usefulness in enlarging our conceptions of God, and the manner of his divine administration by which a universe of creatures is made happy. In the Old Testament this description of the Supreme existence is less frequent and explicit, and though the doctrine be less fairly traced in this, we may draw many substantial proofs of its truth from the Hebrew books.—When the incarnation took place, and the mystery hid from ages was to be revealed, the knowledge of a divine trinity was necessary for just apprehensions of the moral and gracious exhibition. The doctrine was now drawn into view, and from this period we find it asserted in plain terms, and made a principal article of Christian belief. Had men been left to form their own opinions of this great truth from the representation of holy scripture, without the refinements of philosophy, and explanatory creeds of human composition, formed in those days when the powers and limits of men's understanding were little known, I conceive there would never have been so warm an opposition to the truth. Let a person who is unprejudiced, who hath joined no party, and who justly conceives the necessary unsearchableness of the Supreme Being, read the holy oracles with candid attention, and think he will find that the peculiar manner of divine subsistence, which we mean by the Trinity, is plainly asserted in many passages, and implied in innumerable others.

That the Father, Son, and Spirit, are in some respects described to be distinct, and performing distinct offices in the agency of creation and redemption, that in their personal character they have the descriptions of perfect and most glorious is certain.—That to the Father, Son, and Spirit, divine names, infinite prerogatives and works are ascribed, and that all this is descriptive, not merely of different divine exhibitions, but of an ineffable manner of existence cannot be denied. This is all which can be understood and believed by men. In such conclusion the Almighty is not represented one and three in the same sense and manner, but in some manner which is most glorious for himself, and most beneficial to the universe.

The word person hath come into general use in designating the Father, Son and Spirit; when applied to this subject it hath an appropriate and different meaning, from its use when applied to creatures; in the latter case, it implies distinct and separate existence; in the other a mode of existing peculiar to godhead. This great truth is revealed to our faith in the holy oracles, not with any attempt to point out the form of connection between the Father and Son, and every attempt to explain causes perplexity on a subject which is dark to human understanding merely by its

greatness. Assurance in attempting to help out the descriptions of God; with numberless invented terms no where found in scripture, most uncertain in their meaning, or perhaps destitute of meaning, which have become technical in treating this doctrine, hath done an infinite disservice to the truth; and when we see the consequence of such a procedure, it assures us we should not attempt an explanation of what the holy word passes in silence.

The unity of godhead, and that manner of being which hath been called trinity are both affirmed, and why should it be thought incredible that finite minds are unable to comprehend infinite nature. Let human reason neither object, nor attempt an explanation; to deny is disbelieving our best guide; to explain is an arrogation of infinite understanding. "Canst thou by searching find out God, canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection?"—Why the sacred trinity is singled out as more inconceivable and improbable than other divine ascriptions, I cannot apprehend. Self-subsistence, immensity, universal infinitude, and the power of presence in most distant places, applied to creatures are full of absurdity; and applied to godhead are a manner of subsisting wholly inconceivable by us; and the same kind of arguments which are thought to militate most directly against the trinitarian hypothesis are equally opposed to all the perfections by which godhead is in our idea distinguished from creatures. The capacity of human reason was fixed by divine wisdom, at wise limits, and then divine descriptions are accommodated in the best possible manner to our powers of conception.

Most of the objections against this truth are evidently built upon a supposed likeness between the manner of infinite and finite existence; but consequences deduced from the one and then applied to the other mode of being are fallacious in their origin. After all perhaps the best method of quieting the mind in a full belief of scriptural representation, is to see the connection of this doctrine with the moral and evangelical systems. Doth not this doctrine more than any other, accommodate the divine rectitude to human comprehension? and show us why moral virtue is useful to supreme existence in the exercises of his own nature? By the doctrine of the trinity Jehovah is represented social within himself from the glorious manner of his own existence. A being capable of ineffable communion and society, within his own most glorious existence. We always conceive a capacity for social intercourse to be an excellence of rational nature, and the enjoyment of society essential to blessedness. Men's conception both of happiness and virtue, are so connected with social communion that we do not know how a being in solitude can be happy. The reason which led the heathen to feign a plurality of Gods, must be to perfect the divine happiness, by such communion between themselves, as could not be enjoyed with creatures of inferior being. A solitary blessedness was to them inconceivable. At the same time by the belief of more

Gods than one distinct in their natures, a door is opened for opposition in council and government, destroying the benefit of that communion which they attempted to establish. A multifarious theology necessarily runs into every thing unfit, and was a great means of helping forward the absurd heathen notions of virtue. How much more glorious is the Jehovah of scripture! a God in unity, with a social nature! capable of all communional blessedness, and equal exercise within himself. Doubtless the Godhead possesses every excellent power and perfection, and if a capacity for communion within his own admirable existence be a perfection, reason and common sense must approve the trinity as a glorious doctrine, worthy of the self-existent nature, and tending to enlarge our conceptions of his glory: But still what their living energies and powers of action and enjoyment may be, and how they act is unsearchable as the other parts of divine immensity.

The imperfection of created natures obliges us to go out of ourselves for communion and social enjoyment, and it is fit that natures made for dependence should be thus limited. The possession of a capacity for independent enjoyment is a prerogative of godhead peculiar to self-existence. That the holy scriptures represent Jehovah a God social within his own nature, is very evident from examination. The exercises of covenanting, loving, honoring, glorifying; giving and receiving; promising, fulfilling and obeying, with all other essential acts of communion, are ascribed to the Father and Son, in their mutual existence. These are principal exercises of society or social communion, and they authorize us in respecting the everblessed Jehovah, as being, within himself, a social God.—To accommodate the communional subsistence to our conceptions, and represent it in a manner most instructive to our minds, the distinction of Father, Son and Spirit, is revealed in the scriptures, and the several offices of supreme efficiency ascribed to each in the production, government, and redemption of men. These names and relations were doubtless the most expressive of sacred truth, which could have been selected; but still wholly inadequate to express the great relations of Deity.—To ascribe all the peculiar properties of the relation between Father and Son to the self-existent God; or to attempt a feeble spiritualization of our paternal and filial qualities, and then apply them to the Deity, is most injurious to so vast a subject.—If these thoughts be true, it for ever repulses all objections against moral duty; if they be true, it proves that the moral law arises from the manner of divine subsistence, and the blessedness which he enjoys within himself, therefore must continue while God exists and eternity endures.

If the doctrine of a Trinity, be the foundation of all moral virtue, let men be careful how they reject it!

In another paper I may attempt to shew that unless this doctrine be true, there can be no redemption for sinful men.

A.

The Soliloquist.

No. 3.

A SECOND week is past and I do not even begin to see my way from these difficulties. Indeed I fear that I do not even begin to see the danger of my case. I always believed there was a God, and supposed that with a few hours warning I could prepare myself to come before him. Alas! Notwithstanding this, he was not in all my thoughts. I am now more perplexed than ever what to think of him, of death and eternity. Is there an eternity? I cannot perceive it by my senses, yet conscience constantly forebodes the truth. Yesterday I almost persuaded myself to care for none of these things; but how dreadful was the night. Was it the place into which I was retired, or a conscience within me that renewed my trouble? Surely it was the latter. If I am for ever to feel this conscience, I am for ever unhappy. Little before this did I conceive the terrors which must distract those who forget God. According to my last resolution, through the week past, I have been endeavoring to trust in the Lord that I might be safe. Ah! I cannot do it. This which I supposed the most easy, I now find to be the most difficult thing in the world. Once I should have said that I always trusted in the Lord, now I find that I had no just conceptions of his presence. Oh! his terrible majesty, his law, its penalties, and the succeeding state of eternity. But how can I trust in him! While he is all around me I know not where to find him. I am afraid of him! Attempting to trust brings him into my sight, which makes me more fearful. If he be infinitely good and gracious, as all Christians say he is, I sometimes doubt whether there can be any grounds for my fears. So also say those on whose opinions I once placed my dependence, but this doth not give ease to my pained mind. Why do I not trust in God? Some strange arrow hath pierced this breast which I cannot extract. I cannot trust while I do not love him, and I cannot love him while he condemns me, and requires that I should forsake all my former practices of living. What is justice? does justice make men unhappy? Must I for peace of mind become a devotee in all my thoughts and actions? This is becoming like the very people whom I once abhorred, but now find myself necessitated to visit. But why do I fault them? They have done me no injury, they are kind, they appear solicitous for my happiness, and have not once reproached my past life, as I expected they would. Perhaps the discourse I heard this evening may do me some good. If it be so "That all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness;" I certainly ought to apply myself to reading the Bible which I have very much neglected. I felt the reproof of the speaker when he said "reason may assist you to understand, but the scriptures must lead you to a knowledge of the truth." Also, when he said "The holy oracles teach us who do trust in God, and who deceive themselves when they think they are trusting."

Have I relied on reason more than I ought? Have I been deceived when I tried to trust in him? I will now devote myself to searching the scriptures. But are these indeed the word of God? are they wholly true? must all they say be fulfilled? I once thought otherwise, and if this is indeed the case! Ah——I must make the attempt. This state of uncertainty and guilt is insupportable!

No. 4.

"PRAY without ceasing," was the theme of discourse to those serious people whose meeting I have again attended. Could I pray with the fervor of the speaker, I would never transgress this command. Who has told him the state of my mind! Certainly he described me, when he solemnly said, "O gracious God, have mercy on any in this assembly who walk in doubt, in the terrors of death, and see no light." I felt like Judas at this moment, and my old companions appeared to me like the Jews crying, crucify him! crucify him!—Whence doth guilt arise? From the testimony which a man bears against himself. I am exceeding guilty in my own sight, neither do my own endeavors give any relief. I have been reading the scriptures. Alas! they condemn me. It is true they were given for reproof and correction. Every chapter, every verse reproves me! How many sentences of condemnation do I find written against me! Reading the scriptures doth not change my disposition. They tell me I am a sinner, wl ich only aggravates my pain. They direct me to believe in Christ, and I do believe that he came into the world to save sinners, after all I remain as I was. I wish to know what kind of faith that is which gives so much comfort to the mind—I exercise my reason, I read the scriptures, I try to trust in God, but the sentence remains. I once thought it only the sentence of God, but I now find it the sentence of my own mind, and to this I must submit. I try to do every duty, to be just, honest and kind: I have left several vices in which I am ashamed to think I indulged myself; I have renounced the great sin of ridiculing religion and serious people; I have determined to be a praying man, and who knows but in this way I shall recover peace to my mind! Though sin may terrify, yet I think a gracious God will not cast off any one who is attentive to these duties.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CONNECTICUT MAGAZINE.

SIR,

IN the beginning of your Magazine, of the last year, you published a letter under the signature of *Matilda*. I am Matilda's minister. Soon after this, you received a letter from me, in language which I now acknowledge to be unkind, and perhaps if I should say menacing it would not be unfit. I suppose that my letter prevented the further communications of Matilda from being published. I thank you for giving us both time to think. Here, in justice to her character, I must say that

she is now one of the ornaments of my church, and her conversion was extraordinary. I must also own, that under the blessing of God, the publication of her letter was a principal means of leading me to review the manner in which I have instructed the souls committed to my charge.

While I say that such concise descriptions as she gave cannot do justice to discourses commonly delivered in the pulpit, I acknowledge that the sermons to which she referred were very defective both in matter and manner. I was educated under a preacher as deficient as myself. Him I admired and made my model in sermonizing, without any consideration of the consequences. I fear that many young men are thus ensnared into sentiments, and a manner of expressing them, which is not consistent with the gospel of Christ. To say I have changed my sentiments would not be true; for, indeed, I had no fixed system of belief, except this, that I meant to be a Christian. I was never taught to study the gospel systematically. My sermons were from texts accidentally detached from the bible, of a certain length, and filled up as imagination led me. I now see it is not strange that my hearers were not instructed—seeking sinners directed in the way to life, nor the church edified.

Since the reproof which I so unexpectedly received, I have set myself to review my sermons, and my religious sentiments. Some errors I have rejected, and tried to amend many deficiencies; especially that loose way of preaching without order which I mentioned before. When I commenced a preacher, it was my misfortune to be too fond of popular applause, and I found this was obtained in many congregations, by what I now esteem mere conceits of expression, the sound of a smooth sentence, or oddity in the choice of a text. Hence I neglected the solemn address of the scriptures, and was ready to think the sound reasoning of the apostles too metaphysical for my pen. But I now find both the folly and sin of these notions.—I also find that I have sunk in the opinion even of the most vain part of my congregation. This, however, is not the worst of the matter, for I have brought guilt on myself, and my ministration hath not been blessed to improve the morals or religious knowledge of my people, as I see in several neighboring congregations. My method was, after selecting a text, to write many miscellaneous things which I supposed to be true, without applying them to any important doctrine, or considering them in relation to a general scheme of religious belief or evangelical practice. By this means I preached no doctrine or scheme of religion, and a great part of what I said was liable to be misapplied by those who heard me with an anxious desire for instruction. With respect to the divinity of Christ, I never absolutely disbelieved it; yet I indulged many crude conceptions on this deep and mysterious subject, and allowed myself in certain expressions which I now think unwarrantable. I now believe that Jesus Christ was very God as well as

man, and that if he be not, there is no name in which I can address the throne of grace. To all the sentiments, which, from public evidence, I suppose you believe I cannot yet subscribe; but hope that in my present examination I shall be directed from above.

In the midst of my anxiety I find a pleasure in my ministry which I never felt before; pain lest I should err, and pleasure in becoming convinced of the truth. Perhaps I may soon write you again. As you have hitherto retained my name a secret, I presume you will in this instance.

I remain yours
with great respect.

Religious Intelligence.

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TO THE EDITOR OF THE CONNECTICUT MAGAZINE.

REV. SIR,

IT will be recollected by the readers of your Magazine, that in the one published last July, mention was made, by the writer of the account of the revival of religion in Hartford, that a work of divine grace had also recently commenced in the west church and congregation of the town, under my pastoral charge: and that, in the proper time, probably, a narrative of it would be inserted in a future number of the Magazine. Though the work be now hopefully still increasing, yet as the RELIGIOUS PUBLIC are uncommonly desirous to become early possessed of religious intelligence, it is thought it might not be unacceptable, to bring forward a larger account of the work of God's mercy and grace among us.

Whenever a work of divine grace, through the convictive and regenerating influence of the Holy Ghost, takes place among a people, a brief narrative of it may subserve many happy and important purposes. All the praise and glory of it indeed ought to be ascribed where due, to him who doth all things according to the counsel of his own will; who, as a perfect sovereign, works when —where—and how it seemeth him good. All blessings, whether of a temporal or spiritual kind, come from him, as the overflowing fountain: every good and perfect gift proceedeth from the FATHER OF LIGHTS, with whom there is no variableness or so much as shadow of turning. He will have mercy on whom he will have mercy. He grants his HOLY SPIRIT, as seemeth good in his sight, to render effectual, upon the hearts and consciences of his people, the ministrations of the gospel. Whatever instruments are honored in accomplishing his gracious designs, his is the power; and his should be all the glory. Paul may plant and Apollos water, but he giveth the increase. When he has designs of good for individuals or a congregation of his people, he will employ such means as, in his sovereign will, are agreeable to his infinite wisdom. A PREACHED GOSPEL is the great instituted means of the salvation of sinners. *For after that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign and the Greeks seek*

after wisdom. But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness. But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and wisdom of God. To lay before the public, an account of a work of God's holy Spirit in bringing the careless and hardened sinner to attend with all seriousness and diligence to his salvation, and to embrace cordially the glorious Redeemer: or when many are hopefully renewed and pardoned, must redound greatly to the honor of religion; is a delightful proof of the truth of the gospel; is a clear display of its power; must enliven the zeal of pious Christians;—animate their affections;—bring them more abundantly to the throne of grace in fervent prayers and praises; be the occasion of thanksgivings unto God from many; and of the advancement of his glory. The many valuable purposes, therefore, which may be answered by such an ACCOUNT, are a sufficient reason, why it ought not to be omitted.

Many who call themselves Christians, and would feel wounded, if others should be unwilling to extend charity to them, have deep prejudices against revivals of religion, or great reformations in a church and congregation. They look upon them as only scenes of enthusiasm—or the mere effects of the natural passions, and accordingly disbelieve them, or impute them to the power of sympathy. But nothing can be more agreeable to reason, to scripture, and the soundest principles of philosophy, or to the make and constitution of the human soul. We have, indeed, in the sacred volume, several instances of revivals of religion, beautifully stated—where the preached gospel had a wonderful effect—where the word of God *mightily grew and prevailed*, as on the day of pentecost, in Acts ii. 37, 38, 39. In Samaria, Acts viii. 5—8; at Antioch, Acts xi. 2—25; at Thessalonica, Acts xvii. 1—5; at Berea, Acts xvii. 10, 11, 12; at Corinth, Acts xviii. 8—and at Ephesus, Acts xix. 17—20. And in all the various ages of Christianity, and countries and places, where the pure gospel has been preached, and its plain, essential, and distinguishing doctrines have been deeply, faithfully, and powerfully explained and urged, there have been seasons of great and remarkable revivals of religion. Where the doctrines of grace, recognized in our public confessions of faith, have been either denied or concealed, no revival of religion was ever known to take place. There is the power of godliness as well as the form. *The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.* There is heart-religion as well as the mere external observances. Experimental and vital piety is not a pretence or enthusiasm, but a glorious reality. All pious people have, for substance, the same views, feelings, and exercises in regard to the things of their salvation, let them belong to whatever communion of Christians they may. True religion is the same in one as another. As human nature is the same over the world, so of course must the exercises and lives of God's people be. There is one God—one Lord—one faith—one baptism. There

must be in the nature of the case in all real followers of Christ, the same supreme love to God—the same faith in a Redeemer's blood—the same repentance for all sin—the same friendship to religious institutions—and the same holiness of life in kind, however different in degree. Even in times of general deadness and inattention to religion, there may be many on whose hearts, though unknown to all around them, the gospel dispensed may have its desired effect. For the faithful dispensation of it is, at all times, in a greater or less degree, successful. Some are awakened though they never disclose their feelings to their nearest friends. Some are convinced of their danger from sin, and groan in secret. Some are savingly enlightened, and experience the renewing power of the HOLY GHOST, tho' they dare not admit a hope of their interest in the atoning blood of a precious Redeemer.—Others are edified, confirmed, and comforted; are enabled to devote themselves to a life of piety, sobriety, and righteousness.

But at some peculiarly happy seasons, never to be forgotten, but to be remembered with admiring joy, and adoring gratitude, it pleases a gracious and merciful God, in the riches of his goodness, to bow the heavens and come down, by his Holy Spirit, to a congregation. He clothes the means of grace with wonderful power. A spirit of prayer is given, in a surprising manner: heavenly dews softly descend and enliven the fields of Zion—nay, mighty showers of grace are poured out. The Father of mercies, a sovereign God, opens his treasures of awakening, convincing, and renewing influence, causing it to rain on one city and not on another, and who says, *I will pour water upon him that is thirsty and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring. And they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water-courses. One shall say I am the Lord's, and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob, and another shall subscribe with his own hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel.*

God's word is as a fire to melt, and a hammer to break the rock in pieces. The peculiar and discriminating doctrines of the gospel, when the influence of the Holy Spirit accompanies them, have a wonderful force.—*For the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

In the year 1799, there was a very extraordinary work of God's grace among us. It continued about a year and an half. More than one hundred obtained a hope of a blessed immortality and joined themselves to the communion of the church. The work then was very general over the congregation, persons of different ages and sex were the subjects of it. Some, nearly seventy years old, were sharers in it. Many, in middle life. Many, also, in youth. An account of that revival of religion among us, was published in two discourses, intitled THE GROUNDS OF THE CHRISTIAN'S HOPE. In the year 1807, in a part of the

congregation, we had some special attention to religion, in which several persons obtained a hope that their hearts were reconciled to God; and they were added to the communion of the church.—In 1808 it pleased the God of all grace again to visit us with the effusions of his blessed Spirit, and a great revival of religion took place. It was spread over the whole congregation. The visible effects were great. The worshipping assemblies of God's people were more crowded.—A great solemnity and seriousness were diffused over them. Several public religious meetings, during the week, were desired to be instituted. And they were full. The people were anxious to hear from God out of his word. They were all attention and solemnity. The divine gracious presence seemed to be enjoyed. The work commenced in the beginning of the month of May; and still continues to this day;—and is still, we judge, increasing. May it farther progress: and continue, and visit each heart and family! It is mostly among the youth. We have already had upwards of forty added to the Lord by a public profession of religion, who hope that they have experienced a renovation of heart.—About twenty more, have recently obtained a hope of salvation. And thirty, perhaps, are still exercised with deep conviction. And we find, from time to time, instances anew of persons brought to consider their ways, and to enquire, "what they shall do to be saved."

There are two peculiar characteristics of the work. One is, the subjects of it, during the period of their awakenings and convictions, appear to possess more doctrinal light and knowledge, than is usual. They have just and correct ideas of the great and peculiar doctrines of the gospel. They were able to converse on them with a good degree of propriety. Their convictions were accordingly rational and regular. They through the law were dead to the law, that they might live unto God. The law was as a schoolmaster to bring them unto Christ, that they might be justified by faith.

The other thing observable of the work is the length of time their convictions continued.—The most, who have obtained a hope that they have experienced a change of heart, were three, and four, and five months, under very deep convictions. Their distress of mind was very great, as great, in many instances, as they could bear. As many as twenty, even now, after eight months, are still exercised with strong convictions—still in great anguish of conscience.—There has been a great uniformity in the views, feelings, and exercises of all who have been the subjects of the work.—A great and general attention to religion, among a people, is a display of the rich mercy of God. To be awakened to serious thoughtfulness about our future state, and to be brought under conviction of sin and danger is altogether reasonable, and an unspeakable blessing in divine Providence. But to be renewed in the temper of our hearts, by the power of sovereign grace, is the chief mercy, the greatest which can be conferred on us in this life. How happy the effect and consequence of a revival of religion on church and state!

For religion is the source of all spiritual peace, and lays a basis for our being happy in life, happy in death, and happy to all eternity. No wonder, then, that Christ says, *There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.* Pleasing is the thought, that in our country, and in THIS STATE—the past year has been so greatly distinguished by many revivals of religion—and that an unusual attention to it, among various denominations, has taken place, and now exists in England, according to authentic information.

I am sir, yours,

NATHAN PERKINS.

West Hartford, }
Jan. 2, 1809. }

The Fourth Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society.—May 4, 1808.

(Concluded from p. 38.)

YOUR committee, in their last report, informed the society, that, in consequence of more particular intelligence, they had taken into their consideration the subject of printing the scriptures in the Irish language.—They have since received a variety of information on this subject, the result of which, upon the whole, rather tends to confirm the resolution which they originally adopted, that the utility of an edition of the scriptures in Irish would be very limited and partial, and at present is not of a nature to induce them to depart from that resolution, although no final decision has been adopted. Your committee, however, have had the satisfaction to grant a further considerable supply of English Testaments and Bibles for seventy-four flourishing Sunday schools in Ireland, consisting of about 4000 scholars, who were in much want of them, at half the cost prices. They have also availed themselves of the assistance of a member of this society for the distribution of 1000 New Testaments in Ireland; and have voted a supply to a Roman catholic school in the same country.

Your committee have also sincere gratification in reporting that *the Dublin Bible Society*, (now designated, *the Hibernian Bible Society*) has received considerable patronage; and that they have endeavored to promote the object of its institution in the circulation of the holy scriptures, by a donation of 100*l.* from the funds of this society.

It is with equal satisfaction that your committee announce the formation of a Bible Society at Cork, under the presidency of the respectable diocesan of that county, and that they have promised its committee every advantage in the supply of Bibles and New Testaments which this society enjoys from its connexion with the Cambridge university press. A similar promise has been made to a Bible committee of the synod of Ulster.

Your committee have also presented the Bible Society at Cork with a donation of 100*l.* for promoting the circulation of the holy scriptures.

Your committee have also directed their inquiries with re-

spect to the necessity of an edition of the scriptures in the Mank's language, for the accommodation of the inhabitants of the Isle of Man.

The supplies and donations of the holy scriptures either in whole or in part, exclusively of those which have been already noticed, to various classes of people within the united kingdom, have been very extensive this year. Seven thousand copies of the French Testament alone have been voted to the French prisoners of war. The German soldiers and poor natives of Germany, in different parts of England and Ireland, have been amply supplied; several copies of the scriptures have been sent to the poor sufferers by the fire at Chudleigh in Devonshire; an addition has been made to the former donations of the scriptures to the prisoners in Newgate and other jails; a supply has been sent for the use of the numerous female convicts sailing to New South Wales; and a grant has been made to the REFUGE FOR THE DESTITUTE. In all these instances your committee feel a confidence that their application of the funds of the society to supply the spiritual wants of a portion of their fellow creatures, so particularly requiring such assistance, will be generally approved. It is in cases like these that the benefits of the institution operate with the greatest effect; and the contributions of the individuals composing it thus take a direction which must be gratifying to the feelings of all.

Your committee have the satisfaction to report that the institution of the British and Foreign Bible Society continues to receive the same liberal support, which has enabled it to give so wide a scope to its operations. The contributions from its friends in Scotland, who from the first have shown a most active zeal to promote the prosperity of the institution, have been very ample this year. The association established in London for contributing to its funds, have continued their active exertions with increased effect. And the funds of the society have received an augmentation from congregational collections in England, as well as from the liberality of individuals. In their appendix to their second report, your committee published an extract from the resolution of the Birmingham association, as affording an example of a plan of proceeding peculiarly adapted to aid the object of the British and Foreign Bible Society, and the benefit which has been derived from it, as well as from the association in London, and a similar one in Glasgow, makes them anxious in pointing out these associations, which have been established for the special purpose of aiding the funds of this society, in the hopes that they will become objects of imitation, wherever such a measure is practicable, throughout the island. Your committee have also to mention the additional names of the most rev. the Archbishop of Cashel, and of the right honourable lord Headly as vice-presidents of the society.

The accession of valuable books to the library of the society has been very considerable this year; and your committee have in every instance

made their acknowledgments for these donations, the particulars of which will appear in the appendix to this report.—By the continuance of the same liberality, your committee trust that the society will in time possess a collection of the scriptures in various languages, as well as of other biblical works, which will prove of the greatest utility, not only to the society in publishing the scriptures, but to such of the subscribers as may have occasion to consult them. The collection has already attained a size which renders an attention to its arrangement necessary; and the Rev. Dr. Adam Clark, to whose disinterested and most valuable assistance in various instances of the most essential importance, your committee have been indebted more than they can express, has obligingly undertaken this arrangement. The name of the donor will be conspicuously written in each book.

The members of the institution must have remarked, with satisfaction, the progressive increase of business arising out of it. The various editions of the scriptures published by the society in English, Gaelic, Welsh, French, and Spanish, the collection and care of them in the first instance, and the distribution of them afterwards, involving a very extentive and minute detail, which it would be tedious to specify, have hitherto occupied a very large portion of the time and attention of Mr. Smith, who has had the charge of the depository office of the society. In the commencement of the institution, the duties annexed to this department were comparatively small, but they have lately increased to such a degree as to induce your committee to adopt an arrangement, which, by separating the functions discharged by Mr. Smith, is, in their opinion, calculated to facilitate the execution of the whole. Your committee, after a minute and attentive consideration of the subject, were convinced that the premises and situation of the depository were no longer accommodated to the increased business of the society; that the duties of the depository, as far as regard the collection and distribution of editions of the scriptures, could be more advantageously performed by adopting the plan in use by other societies, who employ a bookseller for these purposes, and that the object of economy might be equally consulted by an arrangement to this effect. Under this impression, your committee received proposals from various respectable booksellers, stating the terms on which they would agree to undertake this part of the business of the society; and, after minute comparison and calculation, they have adopted those offered by Mr. Leonard Benton Seeley, No. 169, Fleet-street, to whom all future orders are requested to be sent, *post paid.*

Your committee will still continue to receive the very important services of Mr. Smith, as their collector and accountant.

On the benefits of the institution the committee think it unnecessary to descant, as they have been so fully displayed in their annual reports, exhibiting a plain statement of the operations of the society, in conformi-

ty to the unity and simplicity of its object. It may, however, be briefly observed, that the benefits of an institution which provides consolation for the unhappy prisoners of war, the means of comfort and reformation for the victims of the laws of their country, and of moral and religious improvement to thousands of their fellow creatures in so many parts of the world, cannot be too highly estimated. The weight of this last observation will be sensibly perceived, if we extend our view to the effects produced by the example and encouragement of the society in exciting an ardent zeal of co-operation with its efforts both within and without the united kingdom.—Your committee lament that the prospect of a most extensive circulation of the scriptures on the continent, which was opened to their view, should for a time have been overcast; but they have the consolation to know that the active exertions of the friends of Christianity in Germany, Denmark, Prussia, Switzerland, and other parts, have not entirely subsided; and that they only wait the return of a more prosperous period to resume them with redoubled vigor.

On the whole, the committee look forward with anxiety to the day when "the deaf shall hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity and out of darkness."

In the mean time, blest as we are by the mercies of providence, in an exemption from the calamities which have overwhelmed the nations of Europe, let the observation of a correspondent, quoted in the preceding part of this report, "to do good whilst we have the opportunity," make its due impression upon us, and stimulate our exertions to promote the object of our association in the circulation of the holy scriptures, till "all the ends of the world shall remember, and turn unto the Lord, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God."

FROM THE PHILADELPHIA EVANGELICAL INTELLIGENCER.

A NUMBER of persons, belonging to the several presbyterian churches in the city of Philadelphia, having taken into consideration, and being deeply impressed with, the unhappy condition of a multitude of persons in this city and vicinity, who attend no place of public worship, and enjoy no means of religious information; associated themselves together for the purpose of devising and carrying into effect, some measures by which this class of people might receive the knowledge of the truth. The methods, by which they have hitherto attempted to attain their object, are, the establishment of societies for religious exercises, the distribution of religious tracts, and the employment of suitable persons to preach in the destitute places in and about this city. Nine societies have already been established, which are conducted by committees appointed by the Evangelical Society from their own members, and under regulations, which have been inspected and approved by the ministers of the several churches already men-

tioned. These meetings are generally well attended; and chiefly by people who frequent no places of public worship.—Many children also attend, and receive a particular attention from those who superintend the societies. They are encouraged to commit to memory the catechism, hymns and psalms, but especially select portions of scripture; in which some of them make great proficiency.

A plan for printing and distributing tracts has been adopted, and has, in some measure, been carried into effect. Several thousand tracts have already been printed for the society, and many hundred have been distributed among the people who attend the religious meetings before mentioned.

Occasional services from ministers of the gospel, have been obtained as frequently as possible; and, for some months past, the society have had the assistance of a missionary, who has assiduously labored in the destitute places in the adjacent country, and also attended the religious meetings in the city.

What the ultimate success of these measures and exertions may be, the society presume not to conjecture; but they feel encouraged to prosecute the object for which they have associated, with renewed zeal and vigor, and hope and pray that their humble efforts may be crowned with some degree of success; believing that if all their labors shall only be the means of saving one soul from death, it will be an abundant compensation.

The object, which the society have in view in giving the above short sketch of their proceedings, is, that the friends of Zion, in other cities and places, may be induced to form similar associations, or to adopt such other measures, as to them may seem most expedient, for disseminating evangelical truth among the multitudes in our country, who are perishing for the lack of knowledge; and especially that the pious of all denominations, may be engaged to concur in a concert of private prayer, for the increase of the Redemer's kingdom, which has been agreed on by the Evangelical Society, and which is here subjoined and recommended.

At a meeting of the Evangelical Society on the 5th of December, 1808, *the following Resolutions were unanimously adopted.*

THE members of the Evangelical Society contemplating with astonishment the extraordinary changes, which have lately taken place in the civilized world; waiting with anxious solicitude, for the farther development of the divine purposes with respect to the nations; receiving with unfeigned gratitude the welcome news of the success of several missions, in carrying the light of the gospel to those remote parts of the earth where the inhabitants have been sitting in heathenish darkness; bringing also into thankful remembrance the refreshing showers of spiritual influence with which God has been pleased at various times to cherish and fertilize his American vineyard; rejoicing at the pleasant prospects now visible in several parts, and among different denominations of Christians on this western continent;

and believing that a kind and merciful God waits to be gracious, and generally bestows upon his people a spirit of prayer and holy importunity previously to conferring his most signal favors ; and that he never fails to answer in effect the prayer of faith : Therefore,

Resolved unanimously to recommend, and this Society does hereby recommend, That the hour, or part of the hour, next succeeding to the rising of the sun on every sabbath morning, be occupied by every individual member in praise to the great Head of the church, for his goodness in sending the gospel to many of the human family wholly devoted to idolatry ; for so much unanimity among his people in the efforts which they have directed to this object ; for reviving his cause in several parts of this continent : and also in importunate prayer to Almighty God, beseeching a continuance of his blessings ; that he would send forth more laborers into his vineyard with increasing success ; that the various commotions in the world may be over-ruled for the advantage of the Redeemers's kingdom, the increase of knowledge, true catholicism, Christian charity and liberty of conscience.

It is also recommended that if the time specified shall be necessarily otherwise employed by any individual, in such a case similar appropriation of some other portion be made suited to his convenience.

And also to the end that all the brethren in Christ of every denomination may be invited to join with the members of the Evangelical Society in addressing the Throne of Grace in a concert of private prayer for the purposes above enumerated, it is further

Resolved, That this minute be published in the Evangelical Intelligencer ; and that the ministers of the gospel who are members of this Society, and all others who may approve of the measure, be requested to mention it to their people, and to invite them to co-operate with us in this important design.

ANECDOTE.

A CHRISTIAN, being asked how to distinguish between true and false converts, gave this answer—Two children, who were going several miles from home, on a dry and hot day in the summer, lost themselves in the way. Their father, who had gone after his children, heard their cries for water and watched their wandering steps, until they came to a well. After they had crept down into the well three or four times and soon come up again, they went down and were so long out of sight that the father knew his children had now gone to the bottom of the well, that they might quench their burning thirst. He runs to the well and calling each child by its name, he says dear child are you alive ? one of the children at once says "No, father, I am dead," and then calls for help. Now, said the Christian, when a young convert has such a sight and sense of the things of God, as at once to express in a child like manner,

the very feelings of a pious heart, you may know that that convert is born of God and is spiritually alive, though he may think himself dead.

ORDINATION.

ON Wednesday December 21st, 1808, the Rev. WILLIAM F. VAILL was ordained to the pastoral charge of the third church and society in Guilford. The Rev. John Elliott made the introductory prayer. The Rev. Joseph Vaill preached the sermon from Jer. xv. 19. The Rev. John Foot made the consecrating prayer. The Rev. James Noyes gave the charge. The Rev. David Smith gave the right hand of fellowship, and the Rev. Matthew Noyes made the concluding prayer.

Several circumstances concurred to render the occasion peculiarly interesting, and affecting. The ordination took place about eight months after the death of a pastor endeared to his people by a faithful ministry of more than forty years. During the destitute state of the church, it was visited with a shower of grace from heaven. A very general, and if we may judge from the fruits in many instances, a radical reformation has taken place within eight months past. Within this period a great proportion of the youth have been brought by divine grace, to feel deeply interested in a preached gospel, and the institutions and order of the church. Both parents and children, in many instances of the same family, and the young as well as old generally have been uniting their exertions and their prayers for a speedy resettlement of the gospel ministry among *them*. It was so ordered in the wisdom of divine providence that the first candidate, towards whom they directed their minds, should according to their warmest wishes, be set over them in the work of the ministry.—These circumstances, concurring with many others of a similar nature, are sufficient to prove that the mingled emotions of *joy* and *gratitude*, no less than those of grief, will sometimes find relief, only in the involuntary *effusion* of a *tear*. When one considers the fact, that, *union*, *friendship*, and zeal in the cause of religion, have contributed more, than the populous state of the society, or any local circumstances, to the resettlement of the ministry in North Guilford, he is induced to say, "*A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation.*"

POETRY.

.....

Dr. Lowth accounts the prophecy of Balaam* the most exquisite and perfect specimen of Hebrew poetry. The following version is a faint exhibition of the beauties of the Hebrew imagery, in that celebrated prophecy.

IN proud array thy tents expand,
O Israel, o'er the subject land ;
As the broad vales in prospect rise,
As gardens by the waters spread,
As cedars of majestic size,
That shade the sacred fountain's head.
Thy torrents shall the earth o'erflow,
O'erwhelming each obdurate foe.
In vain the mind essays to trace,
The glories of thy countless race,
In vain thy kings' imperial state
Shall haughty Agag emulate.
His mighty God's protecting hand,
Led him from Pharaoh's tyrant land.
Strong as the beast that rules the plain,
What pow'r his fury shall restrain ?
Who dares resist, his force shall feel.
The nations see, and trembling fly,
Or in the unequal conflict die,
And glut with blood his thirsty steel.
With aspect keen he mark'd his prey,—
He couch'd—In secret ambush lay.—
Who shall the furious lion dare ?
Who shall unmov'd his terrors see ?
—Blest who for thee exalts his pray'r !
And curs'd the wretch who curseth thee !

* Numbers xxiv. 5—9.

Donations to the Missionary Society of Connecticut.

1809.			
Jan. 1.	Received of Hudson & Goodwin, being avails of Copy-right of second Edition of Dwight's Psalms,.....	$ 200	00
6.	Received of Ebenezer Kingsbury, collected in new settlements,.....	00	65
7.	Received of Holland Weeks, do.	1	45
		$ 202	10